

## Home of Coaches Corner



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Kristy Giza-Mowry, left, residential home director, and Vonnise Acree, house parent at the Dworken and Bernstein Coaches Corner, pose for a photo in the living room of the home in Painesville.

# Group home to open

■ Painesville residence will house at-risk male students from Harvey High School

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Jerimie and Vonnise Acree are anxiously awaiting the sounds of teenagers in their home at 605 Elm St. in Painesville.

The couple are the qualified house parents for a newly licensed boys' group residence — Dworken & Bernstein Coaches Corner.

"We both talked about it and committed ourselves to giving back to the community," said Jerimie, a 28-year-old varsity football coach at Harvey High School in Painesville.

The plan to provide stable housing to four at-risk male students at Harvey High School has been a long four-year process.

"Receiving our certification took a little longer than we anticipated," said James E. Dillard, a longtime member of the Painesville School Board and project director for the boys' home.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services approved the Dworken & Bernstein Coaches Corner this summer and project organizers hope to

## Video online

Listen to a house parent and see views of the home at

[www.News-Herald.com](http://www.News-Herald.com)



have the teenagers living in the group home by the end of the year.

"It's for kids seeking a different environment," Acree said.

"Here is a place they don't have to worry about basic needs. They can reach their full potential."

The project is not about punishing kids or parents, Resident Home Director Kristy Giza-Mowry said.

It's really a support for the parents, she said.

The students learn about independent living skills and college preparation.

The three-bedroom brick home had major renovations to meet the state requirements for this type of residence such as security systems, and smoke and fire alarms in each room.

Dillard said the project came together through a collaboration of Painesville Schools, local churches,

businesses and community volunteers.

Dworken & Bernstein Coaches Corner name honors a Painesville law firm as well as sports coaches who alerted district administrators to the presence of homeless male students on varsity and junior-varsity teams in Painesville Schools.

Dworken & Bernstein arranged to give \$443,000 in unclaimed funds from class-action lawsuits to the United Way of Lake County.

The \$80,000 needed for home renovations came from that gift.

The Acrees moved into the home in January and said they've spent countless hours preparing to become house parents.

Both said they understand the challenges of the project but are looking forward to the opportunity to help the students.

"It might be rough, but I am ready for the challenge," Vonnise said. "(Helping children) is what I wanted to do my whole life."

Giza-Mowry said the students will have a regular family lifestyle with basic rules and regular activities.

"These kids may stay for several years," she said.

"Anything that a family would do (is how they will live)."